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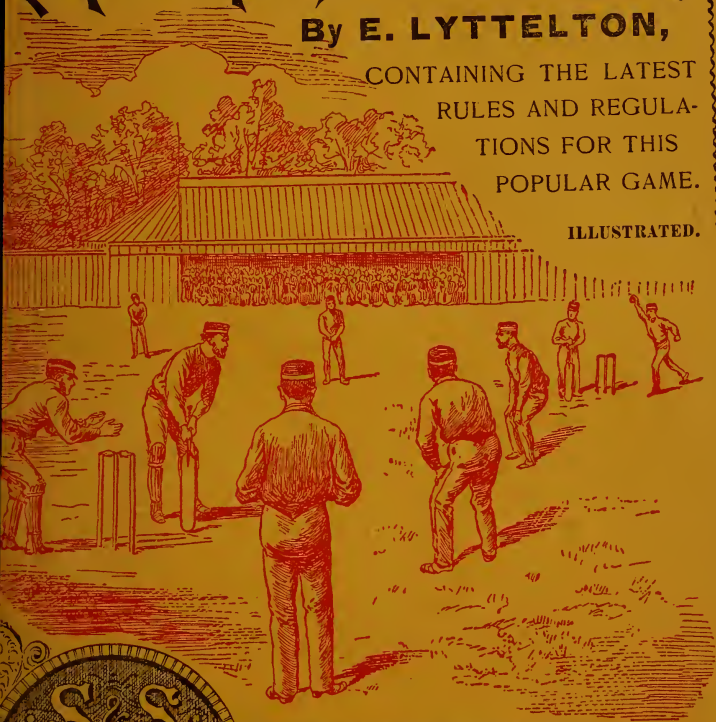
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# INTERNATIONAL CRICKET GUIDE.

By E. LYTTTELTON,

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# International Cricket Guide.

BY

*Edward*  
**E. LYTTELTON,**

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY ELEVEN 1875-8.**

This Book Contains the Latest Rules and Regulations  
for this Popular Game, the most Practical Hints  
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# International Cricket Guide.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CRICKET MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS.

The first essential in fostering of cricket in schools, it is generally thought, is to have some one on the spot whose authority is unquestionable, and whose judgment in the game is universally respected. In many schools this is a master; in others, an outsider interested in the place pays frequent visits, and gives the boys the benefit of his experience and coaching. Another alternative is to have a professional on the spot, who, invested with almost plenary powers, manages the order and arrangement of games, matches, and practice, as he thinks best.

Supposing, then, that a satisfactory "coach" is secured, it remains to inquire into the scope and limits of cricket coaching. What is to be expected from it? Excessive hopes are often entertained by young cricketers of the good they will get from the advice of an experienced teacher; and just as sick people often repose in a doctor, whom they must know is very much in the dark as to the nature of their complaint, the most unhesitating confidence, which, though ill-grounded, is by itself beneficial, so it would be unwise to seriously undermine the faith that boys have in coaching, since it acts upon them as a useful stimulus, and,

like the doctor's advice, it ought to be obeyed, because it is the best thing of the kind to be got. Still it is well to point out that neither as to batting nor bowling can a great deal be done. Fielding is another matter. But suppose a batsman is being coached, and gets bowled out, the best teacher in the world can very often say nothing beyond that he put his bat on one side of the ball; or that he played back instead of forward. But an instant's reflection will show how largely the correction of these grave faults depends on the boy's eye, and how little real help he gets from being told what he has done wrong. Of course he ought to be told it; but the stress of the struggle only then begins for him.

But in the department of fielding a great deal might be done, and it is to the consideration of that important fact that we must now address ourselves.

It is, I believe, pretty generally admitted that a tradition of good fielding may be established in a school. It would be well to state clearly what this admission implies. It implies that fielding is more or less an acquired art; certainly more so than batting and bowling. No one has ever seriously spoken of a batting or bowling tradition existing in any school or institution. This clearly is because we know too well that, even if a school be blessed, with the simultaneous appearance of four first-rate batsmen, there is absolutely no reason to suppose that the next generation will be able to maintain their high standard, however eagerly they may emulate their example. Again, we all know that there is something in base-ball which imparts a remarkable power of fielding, but no result at all comparable to this have been observed in batting and bowling.

We find that though apparently a good fieldsmen is born, not made, yet, owing to certain influences, a tradition of good fielding exists in certain

schools, proving that boys who are not above the average in cricket ability can be got to field better than others; that, moreover, in other schools so little fielding training is carried on, as to make it easy to understand why the standard in this, the least exciting department of the game, should be lower than it ought to be. It remains now to investigate what the nature of this fielding stimulus or tradition is, how it may be brought into operation, and what its effects might be expected to be.

In the first place, we may be quite sure that in teaching boys to field, imitation must be an important agent. Hence it comes that a fielding tradition is much more easy to maintain than to set going. A good cricketing master can show boys what good batting and good bowling is; but, alas! he can in fielding very seldom do more than tell what it ought to be, or, perhaps, in his own case, what it used to be. *Eheu! fugaces*, and the subtle bodily change, known as ossification of sinews, is enough to account for a certain reserve of demeanor on the part of masters in the field. Hence, if an example is to be set, it must be set by the boys to each other. The most sensible thing to do is to select the most promising field and train him. It is worth remarking that, however supple his limbs are, unless he has seen some first-class fielding (and if he has seen any he is better off than most) he will have no idea what is expected of him. The acrobatic movements of a fine cover-point do not come by nature, though there may be a native aptitude for them. A boy will accordingly stand at cover-point and watch a ball go past him which he genuinely believes to be out of his reach; when all the time, if he had really gone at it with a will, and lost no time at the start, he might quite easily have secured it.

Again, unless strong measures are taken, the school-fieldsmen will stand on their heels, while the ball is being hit; and this is generally the



cause of that heart-sickening want of life—that imperturbable middle-aged decorum, which is so often to be noticed among boy cricketers of seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years of age, and is enough, when seen, to make old cricketers weep. But not to stand on the heels requires effort and stimulus; and it is astonishing how often you may make the effort, and reap no reward; the ball doesn't come. But when it does, what a change! The leap, the determination that the batsman shall not score, the racing after the ball, are all part of the same dash which must begin from the toes, not from the heel. Now some of these early principles can be taught to a boy by taking him singly, and throwing or hitting the ball, not too hard, either at him or to one side just within his utmost reach; and, by constant encouragement and exhortation, the trainer may induce him again and again to do violence to his propriety, in the first place, and then to stretch his sinews and curve his backbone till he finds himself capable of a brilliancy which he never before suspected. The exercise is terrific, and ten minutes *per diem* are amply sufficient. It is best to take only one at a time. No one can guess the improvement that is sure to ensue if this *regime* is faithfully observed. Why should it be supposed that dash in fielding should be within the reach of only a few? Consider the years of special effort required to make an acrobat. Why, then, shouldn't a few minutes a day make all the difference to a young fellow's joints in the cricket-field?

I assume, then, that with proper care one or two of the most lissom youngsters can be made into really good fields, and that the example will spread. But a great deal more is required. Now, before this can be inculcated with success, the importance of keenness in fielding must be fully realized. The reason why this part of the game requires so much attention is that a great deal of the



successful fielding we hear of or see is the result of determination and resolve. A deep field is standing with his whole body ready to jump in any direction that may be required. There comes a catch, but it is very doubtful if he can get to it; only because he was ready to start he does so, and perhaps the best bat on the side walks home; or, owing to the same fact, he again and again saves a ball from going to the boundary. Now, if this is the case with a deep field, how much more with cover-point and other "save one" fields. Whenever cover-point or mid-off cover an unexpected ball, it may be that they save three or four runs at once, but it is certain that they prevent the batsmen subsequently attempting a good many which they could certainly run, were they not afraid. The aggregate of runs thus saved is considerable; and the covering of balls only just within reach is largely dependent on the being ready to start.

If any one doubts this let me ask him if he starts for a hundred yards' race leaning forward, with his muscles braced, or standing still like a sentry or a policeman. Everybody knows that a really good start in a short race means a yard or two to the good; and in fielding it would mean a good deal, though not so much, as the direction in which to move is not to be ascertained previous to the moment of starting. Again, nothing is more common than for mid-off, short-leg, third man, and cover-point to have to race after a tolerably strong stroke, which goes between the fields and is worth two or three runs. In every long innings there are very many of these. I will venture to say that the difference between an active man's greatest speed and average running would mean one run saved on each of seven such hits out of ten. In other words, instead of scoring thirty the batsman would score twenty-three.

How to maintain eagerness is a serious problem.

Interest in the games or matches is of course essential; and to secure this, schools adopt the plan of varying pick-up games with house or dormitory matches. In most schools to set house against house, or dormitory against dormitory, is a sure and certain way of provoking interest. A glance at boys playing in these, and at others playing in ordinary pick-up games, will detect the difference in the zest and keenness of the combatants. But the question cannot be settled off-hand by merely instituting house-matches *in perpetuo*.

The contests for first place would be settled before the end of the season, and, even if this difficulty were obviated by the expedient of a list in order of merit—a not uncommon system—a want of variety would be felt if the same sort of matches were continually being played. Added to which there must be games among the first twenty-two in the school, to settle the first eleven; and this would destroy the house-matches. A kind of sham house-match, with the chief representatives playing elsewhere in the “swell” game, is not uncommon, and seems to work well. Anyhow, the present custom is to have a considerable number of pick-up games intercalated among house contests. These games are arranged according to clubs which represent different portions of the school, so that, roughly speaking, it may be said that games divide boys by age, house-matches by houses or dormitories.

Now, as the chief difficulty is to maintain an interest in ordinary games throughout one season, one recommendation may be made with some assurance. The players should be encouraged to compete for colors to wear, which need consist of nothing further than a cap of well-marked hue. There is no reason to underrate the power of this enticement. Care must be taken to avoid expense; and much will be left to the discretion of the cricketing master as to superintending in any

way the presentation of these colors. Boys will show simply astounding want of judgment in their selection of players, and the principle of popularity will be allowed undue weight. Nevertheless, a rough justice is somehow generally attained, and it is unquestionably a valuable piece of responsibility for a young captain to be intrusted with. When flagrant favoring seems to be going on, a judicious hint to the captain of the school eleven—in whose hands the correction power ought to be—will generally set matters right.

The first is the combination of fielding practice with batting, which consists in those boys who are employed in either batting or bowling standing vaguely here and there, and returning the ball to the bowler whenever it is hit in their direction. This, however, is not really practice at all, but more like a lounge, and may be dismissed without further remark.

The second is the attempt to train each fieldsmen in his own place, by placing the eleven round a double-wicket pitch exactly as if a game were being played. Two batsmen then go in, and hit as far as they can to each in turn, running tip-and-run fashion, so as to practice the quick return to the wicket-keep. This is an honest but very ineffectual attempt to meet the difficulty. The fields are being taught something when the ball goes to them; but in real life it is found that this is just what it won't do. Since skilled batsman cannot command the ball sufficiently, each man gets far too little to do, and often the strokes have something artificial about them, and unlike the real thing. Still, for fields favorably placed, such as cover point, mid-off, and mid-on, the tip-and-run plan is undoubtedly useful, and should be occasionally practiced. But the real objection is that only eleven boys can be employed at once, and very likely there is not room for another such

costly expenditure of space as would be required to provide for the next batch of players, the second and third elevens.

The third method is for some one who can give the ball a good larrup to stand a long way off from a semi-circle of fields, and hit balls to them in succession. Here, again, while they are receiving each ball they are learning something and good is done; but (1) the hits off the hand are not like hits off bowling; (2) all the fields are reduced to an unnatural uniformity, cover-point, and short-slip being made to stop the sort of hits which only the deep fields get; (3) the objection again holds good that each man gets too little to do; (4) there is no practice for throwing-in; (5) in most grounds, while this is going on, the batting practice is seriously interfered with.

It is possible for the first two or even three elevens of the school to practice together, so that either two boys are batting side by side at two nets, or four, two back to back with two. Probably the arrangements at most schools would not require more than two wickets to be going at a time. Now the ordinary usage is for each batsman to be enclosed by an off-net and leg-net, or, at least, to play with one net behind the stumps and one between him and the next player; the only fielding that is done is by a few casuals who pick up the ball when it comes their way. Supposing, then, that only the net between two wickets were retained, the necessity would arise for fieldsmen behind each wicket. One wicket, moreover, requires all the off-fields, the other all the on-fields. On these simple facts depends the whole arrangement. As early in the season as possible those players who will probably occupy certain definite posts in the first eleven should accustom themselves to occupying those posts during the time their comrades are practicing batting: the off-fields ranging themselves with reference to

the off-wicket, the on-fields with reference to the on-wicket. Behind each wicket there would be a long-stop as well as, if thought advisable, a wicket-keep.

If the batting practice continued for a long time, to prevent monotony the fieldsmen would, after an interval, change to the place they would occupy in a match in alternate overs, *e.g.*, long-leg would move across to mid-off, or the country and the country fields come over to short-slip and third man. But in general it would be well not to confine the boys too strictly to their allotted posts, since a well-trained cricketer ought to be able to field well anywhere. But there are one or two places where scarcely any one can field really well, except by dint of constant familiarity and practice—notably point, short-slip, and third man. So, naturally, the school representatives chosen for these places would be careful to occupy them in practice. Others might interchange at more or less frequent intervals. But the great desideratum must always be secured, that, instead of loafing about in purposeless *ennui*, the onlookers should be doing something, occupying a definite place in the field; and it would be to their interest to keep their attention fixed on the ball, to learn its motions, to anticipate its sinuosities—in short, to show zeal, and field properly, since by doing so they would improve day by day.

Especially in regard to the three difficult places above named would the advantage of this system appear. For short-slip, for instance, familiarity is extremely important; and the benefit of turning any bad or timid field into a long-stop *pro tem.* would be considerable. An hour at that, with the prospect, in case of carelessness, of either being rapped on the tibia, or of running after a bye, would turn many a poor sieve-like mid-off into a good robust field: and, of course, whoever was



managing the practice would be careful to temper the wind to the shorn lamb.

Another advantage that might then be secured would be the opportunity offered to various players to learn wicket-keeping. The prevailing neglect of wicket-keeping is a gross folly. First, as regards those who are to be regular wicket-keepers, why do they never practice? Their art is every whit as difficult as batting, and it is astonishing how its supreme importance to the efficiency of an eleven is overlooked. There is probably no hope of getting a really good man out on a good wicket, which can be compared to the chance of his sending a catch to the wicket-keeper before his eye is in.

Of course, the regular wicket-keeper's practice of his art must be limited by consideration for his hands. Even allowing for this, it is probable that he would gain if he devoted some time every day merely to taking the slow balls, and watching the fast ones. I repeat that familiarity with the motion of the ball is enormously important. But every member of any team would gain if he were taught how to keep wicket in early youth. In the first place, it certainly helps the eye in batting. The problem of judging pace, pitch, and break is exactly the same in both cases. Next, it teaches sureness of hand in fielding. A field who has learned wicket-keeping must find any catch, especially if it does not involve running, mere child's play compared with a chance behind the sticks. It is impossible that any such continuous exercise of hand and eye of the most subtle description could be anything but valuable to the general quickness and sureness both of fielding and batting. Lastly, even if all the eleven do not learn how to keep wicket, there ought always to be one or more ready to take the place of the regular man, in case of accident or absence.

It remains to notice a possible objection or two.

First, there is no provision made for throwing in. This is true, though at times the fields could throw in as if in a match, but certainly this could be only occasional. The truth is, that throwing-in must be practiced specially by two or three players together in a remote corner of the field, and it must not be forgotten that the above proposal is not to be regarded as supplementing such individual practice, but only as a means of utilizing for fielding purposes the large amount of time now devoted to batting practice by itself. More serious by far is the difficulty that in many schools the exact number who may be practicing at any given time cannot be fixed, and the symmetry of the system breaks down unless the precise complement of men is obtained. But the system suggested is not only symmetrical; it is elastic to any extent. Supposing there are eight boys present (and short of this any social fielding becomes impossible), one will be batting, two will be bowling. The remaining five, instead of trying to cover all the ground, will be given, say only the off-side places, the net covering the on-side. Or two nets could be used, and there would be three or four fields behind the wicket, and one overhead; and so on. The elasticity consists in the use of more nets where necessary to reduce the number of fields. On the other hand, where more than seventeen or eighteen have to be provided for, another practice-wicket would have to be set up at a distance, with one, two, or three nets, according to the number of the overflow. Of course, if it is quite impossible to provide for this space, there is nothing to be done but agitate for more playground. Cricket can neither be played nor learned without good large stretches of green grass, and if such are not provided it is not the fault of this suggestion.

A few words only will be necessary on the subject of catching. The usual method of hitting big

high catches to a pack of fieldsmen a long way off is not bad fun, and is of some use to those who are to be deep fields. It ought to teach them how to judge high hits, and how best to hold their hands, since it seems that each person must settle this for himself. But as to ordinary catching, it is pretty plain from the example of the American base-ball players, that we have a good deal to learn. It may be doubted whether a real increase of agility, consequent on standing ready for a leap in any direction, would not materially increase the number of brilliant catches every year. If the difference between the two classes of players is due to any other cause, I would hazard the conjecture that the base-ball, being very different from the cricket-ball as to the distribution of its weight and the nature of its flight, may partially account for the certainty and brilliancy of the American catching.

The captain of a side can do something to help this state of things by removing for a time a country field to some place nearer in, where his unsettled nerves will be less taxed. Again something may be done by getting young fieldsmen to see that, as long as they are playing in cold weather, they are sure to miss catches. When a ball is certain to sting, the hand is certain to flinch, and the very least reluctance to endure the impact will cause a miss. Therefore, young players should never be out of heart if they miss catches when they are either cold or very tired; and if they can miss a ball now and then without losing heart, they are useful men to the side. On the whole, however, there is little to be said and much to be done in this matter. Constant practice, hardening the hands, keeping up pluck, these things do some good.

We now pass on to consider other important questions in the training of young players. An obvious difficulty presents itself in the early



stages. Small boys cannot possibly use full-sized bats. The mischief that results if they do is fatal. It is impossible for them to play straight, because the end of the bat smites the ground, and the stroke comes to naught. Besides which, the excessive weight makes them late for all the hits. The way out of the difficulty is sensible and simple; a young player should use an undersized bat; and at the period when he begins to feel conscious of growing power, and scents the battle from afar, care should be taken to see that he doesn't order a full-sized bat.

The next question arises from the fact that boys from ten to fourteen or fifteen cannot bowl a cricket ball with ease or for any length of time at twenty-two yards. Hence a movement which is now being made for reducing the distances in preparatory-school matches to twenty yards. But this is far from being so sensible or so simple as the modification of the bat. The shortening of the distance alters the character of the bowling. Everybody ought to know that it makes the difficult balls easier to judge. This is a most material fact, and generally ignored. Secondly, a full-sized bat is meant to correspond to a full-sized ball, but an under-sized bat ought to correspond with an under-sized ball.

The great moment for a batsman is seeing his hit fly free and far; the climax of a fieldsman's day is making a good catch; the glory of a bowler is to be able to keep up on end without fatigue, and give his whole attention to his pace and pitch.

Among all young players a great deal can be done by bringing the imitative faculty into play. We are told that a child learns to speak not only by the ear, but by fixing his eyes on the inside of the adult's mouth, so as to assist his investigation of what is going forward. But a problem soon has to be faced. Care should be taken to give young players a pattern to watch in the shape of

some good batsman of chaste, simple style. A school might be named where the mannerism of some former champion was rapidly developed into a flourish which has survived for nearly thirty years, through succeeding generations, and has certainly worked mischief. By a simple style, I mean one where the batsman merely makes the required motion for each stroke, and eschews ornament. Some ornament is innocent enough where it comes quite naturally, but it is nearly always ugly and mischievous when it has been copied.

But such matters as these concerning the training of batting are connected with the difficult and important question of providing good wickets for the boys.

In many schools, especially in such as enjoy the advantage of being near to a town, cricket is carried on under the disadvantage of want of space. This is a grievous state of things. But still it is a fact that as grim winter succeeds to summer, so football takes the place of cricket, and in very many places has to be played on the same pieces of ground. This is a bad business. During the autumn the cricket pitch requires attention and relaying and doctoring generally. If this cannot be done at the right time it must be done in the spring. But the golden opportunity has gone. Nothing more than some poor tinkering is possible after December's days are done. Moreover, it is not uncommon to find football continuing merrily into the Lent term, so that even the time for putting in a few necessary patches is sadly curtailed. Now the result of this is that, except for the first eleven, the pitches throughout the summer are rough.

It cannot be too often insisted on that this state of things prevents a certain class of cricketers from ever reaching their prime—those namely, who are not gifted with the best nerves, or the best

padded ribs, and have no unusual love for the game to start with. Certain it is that the more robust geniuses will contrive to struggle on and finally merge as good players. But they would not lose, if this epoch of hazardous rough-and-tumble cricket were obliterated from their lives. In after life they will be called upon to habituate themselves to just the amount of variation in the wickets which is produced by the climate, and very little more, since good wickets are becoming the rule everywhere. Why, then, during the most delicate time of their cricket education, should their development of style be seriously and inevitably interrupted? There is no answer to this; all that happens is, that while their progress is hindered, others are prevented from learning the game at all.

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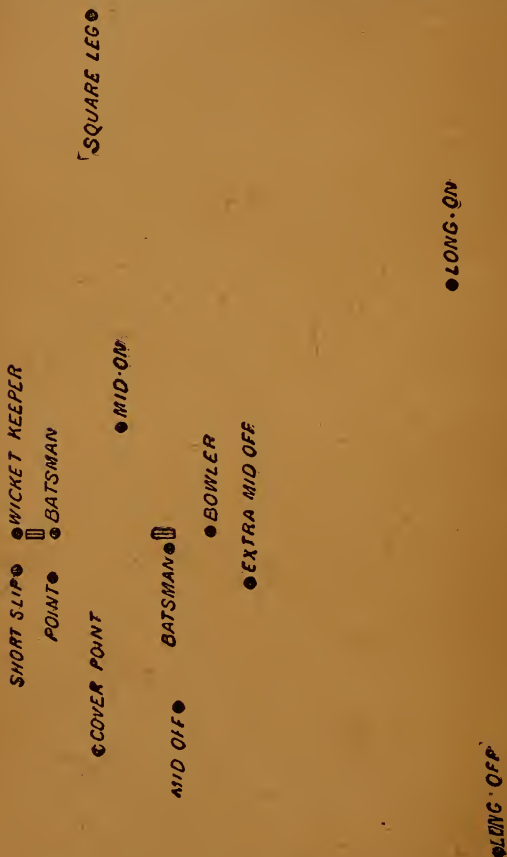
## CHAPTER II.

### BOWLING.

The training of bowlers and bowling is, indeed, a subject which might daunt a stout-hearted author. There is something that baffles the keenest observation, either of telescope or microscope, in a really first-rate bowler's motions; or, rather, it would be truer to say that no amount of inspection reveals the secret sufficiently clearly to enable any one else to acquire it. Men of similar build have been known to copy each other's actions till a strange similarity was noticeable; but there always remains a certain difference in the flight and bound of the ball.

The fact is, bowling is a special endowment of nature, totally unlike anything else. It is easy to see that batting and fielding largely depend on nature; but some of the strangest facts about bowling are not in the least true about other departments of the game, or indeed of any game.

For instance, who can explain the mysterious evanescence of some boys' bowling? We know of



cases where, for a few months it may be, the ball was delivered with just that peculiar spin and

facility which denotes the heaven-sent gift. Winter comes in the usual way, and lo! at the return of spring the bowler is a bowler no more. Some inspired person puts it down to overwork. We all hear a great deal of boys being overbowled; and it is sometimes insisted that, if proper care

**LONG LEG ●**

**LONG OFF**  
(if wanted)

were taken of young boys at public schools, we should see a large supply of bowlers at the universities, and the lamentable inferiority of the gentlemen as compared to the players would soon be rectified.

Good lob-bowlers are and always have been very few in number. This is due less to the inherent difficulty of lob-bowling, than to the proneness of young cricketers to discouragement. A lad of fifteen thinks he can bowl lobbs, and tries; of course, at first, with small success, for the simple reason that the batsman is not afraid of him, his field cannot hold catches, and, if they could, he has no notion where to put them. After one or two attempts at this, he retires to fielding long slips, conscious that he has not yet found his vocation. Now, a young bowler who perseveres is almost sure to get some wickets in this way before long, and, after that, he makes his attempts under new conditions; that is to say, any nervous batsman thinks there is some strange "devil" in his bowling, to which he must succumb; and a bad lob-bowler has a very good chance of doing something if the batsmen are nervous. There is a deal of waste in nature. If other bowlers, who have promise in them, come to naught in the hurly-burly of public-school cricket, or are forever ruined by the sloggers on the village green, how much more the gentle and sensitive "lobster," whose success depends so largely on facts he is ignorant of and conditions he cannot control. A little discouragement at the outset, and he tries no more.

Now, since some lob-bowlers acquire a fair control over the ball, but seem not to know what to do with it when they have got it, a hint or two as to some simple tricks may not be out of place; though it must be repeated that dodginess is no use till accuracy is learned; and that for one accurate plain bowler who lacks ideas, there are twenty who are full of them, but who in their most cunning moments bowl their worst balls.

The following principles, however, are sound. Watch the batsman. It may be that you have before you a dashing, driving bat, who will long



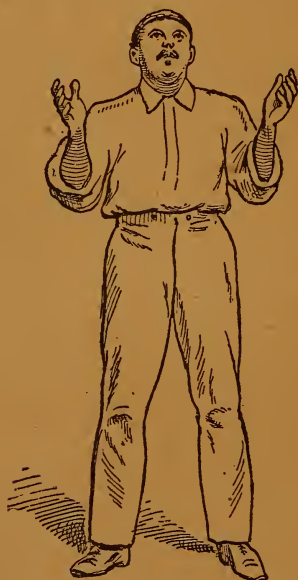
to get your balls on the full pitch or half-volley. Of course, the object is to get him to run out to a ball that is too short. So you first bowl him some steady low balls without much twist; then a high, very slow one, dropping short on the off-side and twisting away. If he is a very nimble man he may get to the place and drive the ball for three or four; but if he lacks resolution he will perhaps only get half-way, and be stumped, or very nearly there, to be caught at cover-point; and mind, if the field drops the catch, go on exactly as if nothing had happened.

Or the batsman may be fast-footed, and playing lobs as if they were fast balls forward and back. The best ball to puzzle him with, is a fast one pitching straight and twisting away, rendering a catch at point possible, or a very slow twister far up, which may tempt the player from a mere sense of shame to do something violent. This style of play, however, if maintained for long is very wearing to the bowler, and on a good hard wicket will generally be difficult to overcome, unless the lobs are bowled with an unusual twist.

Lastly, there is the over-cautious batsman, who thinks he can play every ball back. For him you should have ready a really fast ball on the leg-stump without any twist. This may induce him to step back in the hope of gaining time, and so hitting his wicket. If the previous balls have all been slow and curly, and he has become so that he feels himself thoroughly secure with them, the fast ball is very likely to be effective. But you must learn how to increase the speed of the ball without letting every one see what is going forward.

There are various ways of doing this. One is to increase the speed or length of your run. It is a plain truth that the pace of the ball depends on the run, as well as on the swing of the arm; as can be verified by observing the impetus given

to projectiles thrown from a railway-carriage window. Now, the pace of the run up to the crease before the ball leaves the hand is of small importance; the difference depends on the ball being propelled by a body in fast motion or by one hardly moving at all. So you can run fast up to the crease, and, just at the moment of bowl-



THE BAD CATCH.

ing, stop dead. This will give the ball a slow flight, even though your arm moves through the air at its ordinary rate. Or you may take your usual number of strides, but each a little longer than usual. This gives extra speed to the run, and consequently to the ball, but the batsman can



hardly perceive the reason why. His eyes are fixed on the bowler's arm. Lastly, there is a trick of giving the ball a forward spin with the tips of the fingers as it leaves the hand, which causes a fast bound from the pitch. Combined with a fast run, this spin makes a ball come along at a surprising pace, without the arm doing anything out of the common.

In a general way, then, it may be said that no eleven is ever quite complete without a lob-bowler, for the simple reason that no one ever knows what batsman may fall a victim to a momentary carelessness, or want of nerve, nor how bad a ball a successful lob may be. Let the bowler remember that the worst possible lob, which very rarely gets a wicket, is a long hop on the legs; to be a respectable bowler he must send very few of these. Next, that the slower his ball is the more twist there ought to be; and, as a rule, the slowest balls should be on the off-stump, or outside, the fast ones on the leg-stump. Audacity in the bowler, and pluck in the fields are important. If a batsman is very aggressive and seems perfectly at home, don't suppose that he is so necessarily. Very often a running-out player has secret misgivings which he tries to hide under a display of daring. Lastly, the worst folly which a captain can well commit is to possess such a bowler and to put him on when runs are coming fast.

Some of the above remarks apply to other kinds of bowling. There remains, anyhow, little that can be said in the way of practical advice, excepting perhaps as to the interesting trick that some bowlers have of changing their pace.

Anyhow it seems quite clear that the knack is not necessarily confined to slow bowlers, though it is curious that in England it is universal among slow bowlers and almost non-existent among fast. On the other hand, we may infer that it is more

difficult of attainment in fast bowling, but not impossible, even for a large number. As to the benefits of it, they are indubitable. However long a batsman may stay in, as long as the balls come at different speed he cannot afford to relax his vigilance. He never reaches the condition of that peaceful security, free from thought and



THE SAFE CATCH.

anxiety, which only requires an almost automatic mechanical style of play, to be maintained. If the player plays without unusual vigilance, a perfectly simple ball may bowl him clean out any moment, simply because he fails to note the change of pace. Now, how is this trick acquired?

The principle may be illustrated in this way,

Supposing a man takes a racket and holds it out flat, and on the strings places a racket-ball; then if he makes a swift horizontal stroke through the air, the ball will fall off behind the racket. It slips off behind, because it rests too loosely on the strings to stand the violence of their motion. Now, in bowling this may be done, though it requires time and practice before it can be combined with precision of pitch. It is, anyhow, obvious that up to a certain point the ball must be gripped fast if it is to be thrown or bowled with great speed. Hence, if this grip varies, we may suppose that the ball will in varying degrees answer to the impetus given by the arm. In other words, without a change of action, the pace will change. If bowled overhand, the ball will also be affected by the fingers in succession sweeping down one side as the hand quits it; and this, of course, results in a break from the off in the case of a right-hand bowler. Whether difficult or not to all, and impossible to some, this trick ought to be practiced by every fast bowler. Many would do no good with it, but a few would; and anything that improves bowling even a little is to be looked upon as an unmixed boon to the game. The number of bowlers who have hitherto made an honest attempt to acquire the knack is extremely small, so that we need not forecast from the past what the future might be.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### FIELDING.

Enough, perhaps, will have been urged in the chapter on cricket in schools as to the general importance of the beautiful art known as "fielding," and the possibilities which exist of great improvement in it, if sufficient care is taken by young players. The subject of the present chapter will

therefore be simply some recommendations to be observed by the different fieldsmen in their respective places in the field. It might be supposed that directions as to such matters as stopping a ball, or throwing in straight, would be superfluous. But yet there are places in the field where something more than a supple back-bone and a capacious pair of hands is wanted; namely, knowledge, particularly as regards the place to stand, how to back-up, and to which wicket to throw. On these points a few remarks may be found useful.

#### SHORT-SLIP.

Of all the stations in the field which are rendered less difficult by knowledge, the scientific and much neglected post of short-slip is the one that first claims attention. The reason is, that nowhere is even a good field so lost if he does not know where and how to stand. It is a fact not easy to explain that, whenever a short-slip is placed wrong, he is too square, and probably not far enough out. No captain errs in the reverse sense. It is a mere matter of experience that the commonest snick off fast bowling does fly exceedingly fine, and very sharp from the bat. Now, if short-slip is standing too wide and too near, he gets a catch which not only comes faster than it need, but also is directed to his left hand; in short, a catch such as is frequently missed. It is supremely galling to a captain to see a difficult chance missed, when he knows that, had the field obeyed his directions, it would have been a very easy one. For no matter how fast the bowling be, a short-slip catch is a very easy one, provided the field be in his right place. Even then, one more condition is necessary; he must be keenly attentive, and really expecting the ball to come. Now this sounds like a trifle, but in a long innings it is not so. It means that whenever a straight

ball or one to the off is on its way—and that with some bowlers means every ball—short-slip has not only to have his hands out, but his knees well bent, after the fashion of a wicket-keeper. If he does this every time, it means that he is a keener cricketer than many who might be named. One alleviation may be allowed. If the ball goes at or



THE BAD SHORT-SLIP.

outside the batsman's legs, he need not put himself out. The ball won't come to him, or, if it does, it will come fairly high and slow. Further, he must be on the look-out for the uncanny twist given by a snick. If the ground is hard, that twist will not act unless the ball comes very slowly; if the ground is soft and sticky, the twist

will act: there remains, therefore, a condition of ground when it sometimes will act, sometimes not. No short-slip will find it easy to stop snicks on days of this sort. It is one of the tasks set to people toward the performance of which no advice is of the least service, though in case of failure there will be no lack of blame.

#### COVER-POINT, MID-OFF, AND MID-ON.

In these positions the fieldsman has a plain task, though not always an easy one. That is to say, it consists in the main of stopping balls and throwing them in. There is less doubt about where he is to stand than is sometimes the case.

But still there are some refinements which a good field will hasten to practice. In the first place, the question of where to stand does not vary with the batsmen or the bowlers so much as with the state of the ground. When it is hard, stand well out, because the ball will come easily to you; when it is dead, come in closer. This is plain enough. But it might be objected that if you stand far back the batsmen will steal a short run. True, perhaps; but better risk that than lose all the hard hits that are made in your direction, which a yard or two further back you might cover. But there is no reason why you should lose these short runs. A man who is active on his legs, and endowed with that precious faculty of being able to start at once, has a grand chance of running a man out, especially at mid-off. Not long ago a particularly fine cover-point, after running out a venturesome batsman, remarked quietly, "When I see a man trying that on, I feel like a spider with a fly." A noble sentiment, showing a real cricketer. His method was simply this. When a new player came in, he would retreat further off, and stand with a gentle lack-luster appearance, so as to lead the striker to suppose that he had to deal with an ordinary hard-run

cover-point, who lacked interest in the game and didn't know where to stand. There are shoals of such fieldsmen to be met with, and any one may be excused for thinking that one more of the genus is before him. Soon a gentle hit is made toward cover. The field trots very slowly toward it, but on his toes, and eying the batsman meantime, till he hears the welcome words "Come on" uttered after a short but fatal hesitation. Then,



THE GOOD SHORT-SLIP.

with a startling change of motion, he pounces on the ball and lodges it in the wicket-keeper's hands before the men have crossed between the wickets, or while a hasty but fervid protest is being muttered by the further batsman in the mile of the pitch. Mid-off is even more favorably placed. Very often the ball is hit quietly toward him, and as he stands full in view of the striker, he can easily tempt him by assuming an otiose demeanor



and by standing far out, to risk a short run. Moreover, when he picks up the ball, everything is in his favor for throwing in straight, as the wicket stands broad and inviting before him. There are few more perfectly satisfactory moments in our checkered lives than when one of these innocent frauds is quietly conceived and fairly accomplished.

#### THIRD MAN.

This is a very scientific place, which gives opportunities of running out similar to those of cover-point and mid-off, but is complicated with some difficulties connected with the wicket to be thrown to, and with the peculiar spin of the ball. The puzzle about the latter is that on a hard ground it doesn't act at all; and a young fieldsmen who first takes to the place, full of warning about the twist, will find that though the ball is cut with great severity and glances off the bat, yet it comes hissing along the grass in a straight line.

Now, when a short run is attempted, third man has a choice of wickets to throw at.

If he selects the nearer, he runs less chance of an overthrow, and can better trust the wicket-keeper to be in his place than if he threw to the bowler. On the other hand, the batsman is more likely to be in his ground.

It is common for the striker to be called to, not to call, when a cut is made, and be this right or wrong, third man must take account of the fact. The caller knows his danger, and hastens accordingly, but the striker has to start after hitting, without backing-up, and cannot exactly estimate his danger, unless Parthian-wise he turns his head while running, which diminishes his speed. So if third man is a strong thrower, he certainly ought to throw to the bowler's wicket, a long hop, and, if the bowler is in his place behind the sticks, he will make it very dangerous for the batsman. In



short, third man, the bowler, and the backer-up have it in their power to accomplish a really valuable service to the side. They can, by one brilliant and conscientious piece of combined fielding, deter all the following batsmen on the side from attempting to run these common-strokes, and the ultimate difference in the aggregate of runs is very considerable indeed.

Third man and cover-point should work till they become quick, not in order to win the indiscriminating applause of the mob, but to save runs—a far more important matter. And if it be objected to this that safety in fielding is a very important quality, and that the tendency of these remarks is to put a premium on brilliancy even though combined with uncertainty, it may truthfully be answered that for many a young cricketer the working to secure brilliancy is the only hope of his ever becoming safe in the field.

#### LONG-LEG.

When a hard leg-hitter is in, and one of those old-fashioned good bowlers on, who gives a reasonable proportion of leg-balls, there is scarcely anything in any game that can surpass the delight of fielding long-leg. Of course, the field ought to be a very strong thrower, and a fast runner; but quickness of throwing is almost as important as strength, and even an average runner, if he really runs his hardest, will anyhow begin to be a good field. To take the first point, he ought to notice whether the batsman swings his bat vertically or horizontally, because in the one case the ball will be hit square, in the other sharp.

Then, again, the field must be ready for the miss-hits which slide off the bat and go sharp, and according to these different considerations he will take up his position. In spite of all precaution it is certain that such balls will go wide of him,

and give him a weary trot before the day is over. But he can always remember that if he stirs his legs with real zest throughout a long inning, he will certainly save a great many runs; and no man ought to require more stimulus than this. Again, should it be necessary for him to go sharper, he ought to move nearer to the wicket as well; that is to say, in a line at right angles to that between the two wickets produced. The reason of this is that the snicks and hits which go sharp, are not so hard as the square hits; and the fieldsman ought to save two by standing near in. Then, again, he should naturally observe where the clean hits of each batsman go; especially if they are in the air. Some players hit ball after ball in the same place, and yet a vacuous-minded long-leg will return cheerfully to his original position, twenty-five yards away from the right spot, and wonder to find himself tired by the evening, and the match lost.

As to running the men out, the best chances consist on the gentle strokes played toward him by a batsman who is sharp enough to know that if he runs fast he may score two, and irritate the field. Long-leg's business, then, is to swoop down on the ball as fast as he possibly can run, and send it either a smart catch to the wicket-keeper or a long hop to the bowler, who of course ought to be ready behind the stumps, with mid-off backing behind him. Even if the effort fails, long-leg will probably fluster the batsmen sufficiently to prevent their trying such a run again.

In short, taking one thing with another, it is impossible to ponder on the beauties of long-leg fielding as it used to be, without heaving a sigh over the changes which the prevalence of smooth wickets has introduced into the game. The defense is, as a rule, a comparatively simple affair, and, as for the leg-hitting, alas, and alas! it is

well-nigh a dead art in first-class matches, simply because leg-balls are no longer bowled.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### BATTING.

It will be useful to consider first what is the ideal set before a young batsman. What is it that in buoyant moments he faintly hopes to be able some day to achieve? We may answer this by saying that it is the finished cultivation of certain natural gifts, and that the cultivation of those gifts means simply gradual formation of certain habits which do not at first come naturally. To take one instance. The natural motion of two arms holding an object like a bat, is a kind of pull to the on. A pull is the primitive hit of the natural man; but to bat well a man must play straight. This is a most artificial, laboriously acquired motion; but learning to bat involves the gradual exercise of this motion, till it becomes a second nature. This is for art to triumph over nature, till art becomes natural. And be it remembered that to play with a straight bat, is only one among many things which a good batsman has to do. But however numerous they be, they must be done with lightning quickness. To stop a good ball, or to hit a bad one well, is to put the body into a certain posture—by no means a natural one—before the real crisis has begun. After the posture is adopted, comes the stroke, and the stroke takes all a batsman's powers to make well. But if there is anything wrong with the posture, the stroke is spoiled. The grammar of the science is unsound. The posture must be correct, but it must be adopted unconsciously.

Now, from these principles, which some might

call truisms, a very important practical maxim proceeds. All sound rules of batting should be practiced by a young cricketer without the ball as well as with it. The grammar of the science can be partly learned in the bedroom; the application of the rules must be made on the greensward. Many a finished batsman has tried this plan. Five minutes devoted every night by an aspiring cricketer to a leg-hit or cut, or forward play at a phantom ball, will gradually discipline his sinews to the required posture, besides sending him to bed in a right frame of mind.

Like all other great achievements, the getting a score against good bowling is the result of drudgery, patiently, faithfully borne. But the drudgery of cricket is itself a pleasure, and let no young cricketer suppose that he can dispense with it, though some few gifted performers have done great things with apparently little effort.

Again, drudgery should be supplemented by the imitative faculty. Here, as before, we recommend a certain amount of effort, which in itself is pleasurable. It is a great satisfaction to watch good play; but it ought to be an instruction as well.

So, if drudgery and imitation are fairly employed, and combined with a fair natural gift, the result will be a good style.

Effective play is the only really good style. But here a question arises. We all know that some players have freely adopted what is known as the pull, against which young cricketers are sternly cautioned, and they continue to pull with such success that a hundred runs are sometimes registered to their names. And yet this is said to be bad style. The reason is that a pull is an excessively difficult stroke, which can never be made with safety, except by a finished batsman, and then only on a very good wicket.

The object, then, of a serious-minded young

cricketer being to achieve a finished or effective and graceful style, we find that his principal task may be described as learning certain motions till they become habits. But before enumerating these motions in detail, we are brought face to face with a widely prevailing objection to the idea that young cricketers ought to be taught rules.

Now, we may remark that if cricket rules are not to be taught till sixteen, the game differs essentially from every other scientific game. It is a truism to say that tennis ought to be taught young, and rackets and golf and billiards; or, at least, taking the greatest exponents of these games, both amateur and professional, we should find that a large majority had been trained almost from the cradle, certainly from the nursery.

In the next place, no one proposes that teaching should take the place of nature, or that a youngster should be cramped in his style. The hope is that he may learn to make runs, and if certain motions are to be learned, why not begin them very young? It is pretty clear that nature will have plenty left to do. Nor, on the other hand, should we venture to propose that all the refinements of the game should be taught to a boy hardly in his teens. It is not difficult to see what is really necessary to a beginner. He ought to be taught how to play forward, how to stand up to the bowling, how to put his left leg across.

#### POSITION.

It would appear at first sight as if every one were, as regards position, his own master. A spectator arriving on the ground can generally identify a batsman by his position. How can it be maintained, then, that there is one correct position, and one only? The answer to this is simple enough. It matters little in what posture you put your body while the bowler is beginning to

deliver the ball: the question is, what are you doing as it comes at you? The Spartans combed their hair before the battle, but during the onslaught behaved unlike dandies. So, as the ball is coming you will notice good batsmen behave very much alike. (a) They make the best of the light. The reason is that the taller a man is the easier it is to judge the pitch of a ball; hence we all prefer to see a stumpy bowler advancing to the attack rather than a tall man. (b) They stand with their weight equally balanced on both legs. This is eminently a wise thing to do, because you cannot tell beforehand where the ball will pitch, and the use of both legs is required to enable you to play forward or back properly.

There are other precautions taken by some first-rate batsmen which would be antecedent to the above. They draw a line carefully from the leg-stump out toward the crease, in order to keep their right toe either clear or nearly clear of the leg-stump. The necessity of this is, however, open to question. If you take your usual guard you ought to know accurately where your big toe is. Moreover, there is an objection, perhaps of a somewhat sentimental kind.

Among other preliminaries, most players would advise that the block be taken just inside the crease, and the two feet turned slightly outward, a line drawn between the heels being at right angles with the crease.

So much for the measures to be adopted before and while the bowler delivers the ball. There is one caution to be given to young players to be observed while the ball is in the air. Raise your bat ready for action, but don't brandish, twirl, or flourish it in any way. A flourish in batting is not simply a silly motion of the bat before the ball comes; it is a certain formula of motion which, having been begun, must be finished, no matter what is going on. Now, when you come



to play with professionals you will find that one of the many difficulties that beset you is to gauge the pace of the ball. No two balls are quite alike. So picture yourself with a ball coming at you a good deal faster than you at first supposed; instead of being ready to bring your bat out at once to meet the ball, you are obliged to hurry over your regular two or three motions in the air, and then try to play. Result: Ignobly bowled while apparently scaring flies with your bat from the wicket-keeper's nose.

The ball is now at you. Your impulse is to jump backward toward short-leg, so as to diminish the chance of the ball impinging on your person. How is this innate tendency to be overcome under such circumstances? Any teacher of young batsmen ought to see carefully that the bowling is not too swift, or delivered from some disproportionate height, and that the wicket is respectable. If after these precautions have been taken the player still shifts, a drastic remedy may be employed, by fastening the right leg firmly to a peg, and bowling at it. The great object is to get the boy to see that by standing quite firm on the right leg, and using his bat as a protection, he is quite as likely to escape bruises as by running away. And except on very bad wickets this is the truth. But it certainly is a difficult power to acquire in early youth, that of standing quite still, when a hard sphere is hurtling on its direct road to the kneecap. Resolution and good wickets are the best remedy. Till you have attained to a firm right leg you have hardly begun to bat at all.

#### FORWARD AND BACK PLAY.

You have now learned to stand up to the ball, and give your undivided attention to playing it properly. Supposing it is straight, fairly fast,



and just a little over-pitched; you must play forward to it. Indeed, in your young days, even if the ball be not over-pitched, but just the right length, you had better play forward. Now, how is this done? Advance the left leg, without losing balance; keep head and shoulders well over the bat, but erect; keep the left shoulder turned almost toward mid-off, and move the bat firmly



BAD FORWARD PLAY.

forward till it meets the ball close to your left foot. Above all things, be quite sure that you do all this in the same motion. If you move the leg before the arm, or, *vice versa*, you lose the weight of your body, which, of course, is wanted for the stroke; and this loss partly explains the extraordinary difference of power in some men's forward play compared to that of others. You

will see from these directions that it is a very complex action, far from easy to do all at once, or by the light of nature. You must first learn to do it properly without the ball, then with it. Establish the motion as a habit before the stress of the crisis begins. The chief faults to be avoided are, first, the crooked movements of the bat; that is to say, instead of bringing it down like a pendulum, you will easily get into the way of playing from the on to the off-side, across the line of the ball, or, more rarely, in the other direction.

If you do this, the least miscalculation as to the pace of the ball will be fatal to you. Take warning about this, as it is an exceedingly common fault. Ask your candid friend again, and if he reports mischief, have recourse to private practice in the bedroom.

Now, it has been found that too much forward play on modern wickets is, though a bad thing, less fatal to scoring than too much back play; and it ought to be the aim of all advice in batting to help a young player to get runs, *quocunque modo* runs, otherwise he will not learn the game.

Therefore, if you learn to play forward correctly, you have made a great step forward in the new science. You will, however, not be able just yet to distinguish accurately when to do one thing and when another. Practice and patience must teach you that. A few recommendations may, in the meantime, be made as to dealing with that awkward problem, a good-length straight ball.

Give your mind to making the bat meet the ball. It is useless to try and stop a fast ball by hanging before it a loose, dangling bit of wood. Grip the handle of your bat firmly with the right hand—the left is not nearly so important—and then never play back behind the right foot. This rule is frequently transgressed because a batsman is naturally desirous of gaining time before he acts, and he thinks he will see more of the ball if he

steps back or plays near the stumps—a great mistake; the faster the ball is, the more in front of your right foot the bat should be. In fact, notice a player defending his wickets against very fast bowling indeed. You will find that he plays quite a short ball by advancing his left foot, and meeting the ball between his two feet, about a foot in front of the crease. In your young days you will probably not have to face any bowling as fast as this. The first time you do, your knowledge of life will be materially extended; but you will best prepare yourself against that day by playing back, as it is called, close to the right foot, but never behind it.

Again, when balls are twisting, beware of running out to the off-balls, especially if they are slow. As to running out generally, there is little to be said but this: When you run out at all, do so with a hearty good-will, and an utter forgetfulness of the wicket behind you. How many scores of wickets have been lost by a half-hearted sort of lurching out of the ground just far enough for the victim to be stumped, and not far enough to get near the pitch of the ball. It is a good plan to run out as if hoping to hit the ball full-pitch, and then you will be far enough for the half-volley. But though this mode of scoring is most effective when adopted by a bold hitter with some nerve, it is most disastrous for a batsman to attempt who is not by nature fitted for the task.

There are many good batters who play lobs tight-footed, and a great nuisance they are to the bowler. So make clear to yourself what you are born to do, and do it. Meanwhile there are so-called lobs which are plain fast under-hand balls, and as such ought to be played forward. Be on the look-out for these as well as for the slower ones, which give great promise of twist, and then bound straight on. In short, lobs test the native gift of a young player very well, as he cannot

play them by rule. Perhaps the best piece of advice you could get would be simply this: As long as you are an unfinished batsman, play very steadily at all decent balls, and wait quietly for some of the bad ones which every lob-bowler has in his *repertoire*, and which, if you are patient, he is certain sooner or later to produce. The above remarks apply also to playing some very slow round-hand bowling, such as is seldom seen in good matches, but is effective against boys, and is known by the contumelious designation of "donkey-drops."

#### OFF-HITTING.

It is now time to treat of the punishing of crooked fast bowling. We will deal first with off-hitting. If you look attentively at some good batsmen, you will see that they adopt different motions according as the off-ball is short or well picked-up. In the latter case they advance the left foot; in the former the right. Now, if you wish to adopt the former course, you will abandon all idea of cutting with the right foot, unless you have quite naturally fallen into the way of doing so, and are advised not to change it. If this is, however, the case, you will find some advice on the subject below. At present we will suppose that you have an open mind on the question, and are ready to do what is generally thought to be safest. Advance the left leg, then, well out, and across the wicket till it is in front of the off-stump. Further than this is very seldom necessary. On the other hand it is often right not to step so much across. The object is to command the ball, and if it be coming only a little wide of the off-stump, you will do enough if you merely advance the leg toward the bowler. The left shoulder meantime must be pointing toward mid-off, and the left foot also. Avoid pointing the left foot at point, as the manner of some is. It de-

stroys your balance. Of course your eye has been coldly fixed on the ball all this while, so that the final position of the left leg ought to be determined by the exact distance the ball is from you.

And mind that, as in forward play, your step



THE OFF-HIT, SHOWING THE COMMON  
MISTAKE OF BENDING THE  
RIGHT KNEE.

forward and across should be made exactly as you deliver your blow from the shoulders with the bat. This brings the weight of your body into the stroke, as is explained below. The stroke is

from above, slightly downward. It very often happens that some lengthy assailant is put on to bowl steadily overhand outside the off-stump, for no purpose whatever except to get catches sent to short-slip, point, and wicket-keep, and if there is the slightest unevenness in the ground, a great number of bad, scratchy hits are made before each batsman has got his eye in. Of course, if the balls are kicking, and the batsmen are not very tall, there will be trouble. Something may be done by a policy of masterly inactivity, and letting some of the balls go by; but this is a miserable device unless the ground is playing very difficult. You may, however, do it with advantage before your eye is in, for a few minutes, because the danger is one of hitting late for the ball, and so snicking it.

Again, when the ground is uncertain, you may play for safety by stepping well across and meeting the ball with a full face of the vertical bat, instead of hitting horizontally. But this only applies to balls a little way outside the stump. There is, besides, a danger to which you are exposed in changeable weather. Suppose the wicket has been true and dry, and then comes a slight shower. The players retire, and, on resuming, the batsman forgets that the surface of the ground is faster than it was.

#### THE CUT WITH THE RIGHT FOOT.

This is without any exception the most fascinating stroke in the game. At no moment does the motion of the batsman seem so easy, or his force so mysterious. But it cannot be denied that the delicacy of the stroke means danger to the striker. It is made as follows:—When the batsman sees the ball coming to the off, and not far pitched, he moves the left leg a little forward, to get leverage for his stroke. Be it remembered that he would do exactly this if he were going to make the ordi-



nary left-foot cut, or off-hit with the left foot out.

But the difference is that in the latter case he ought not to bring the left foot on to the ground till he can do so simultaneously with the bat hitting the ball, on the principle of the body moving with the arms. But in the case of a right-foot cut, this motion of the left leg is made before the stroke proper begins. As soon, then, as the batsman has made this preparation, he raises the right foot an inch or two from the ground, holds it poised for a brief moment, then brings it down with a peculiar smart stamp close behind the block hole, or somewhere hard by, according to the exact line the ball is taking; and exactly simultaneously with this stamp, the indescribable swirl of the bat is made which sends the ball skimming between point and third man, or sometimes, off very fast bowling, to the left hand of third man.

If well timed, the stroke gives a kind of soft, creamy touch to the bat, and the whiz of the ball past the admiring third man signalizes one of those moments when a cricketer can justly say he has not lived in vain.

#### LEG-HITTING.

Really good leg-hitters are rare, but where they exist they often win a match for their side. So learn to hit to leg as you have learned the other strokes, by practicing the following motion without the ball. Imagine a ball bowled outside your legs, either of a good length or further up (short of a tice), and you then advance the left leg right out, but not so that you straddle or lose balance, turning the left foot toward mid-on, and keeping both eyes sternly fixed on the ball. Then all in one motion bring the right shoulder well round, and deal a mighty blow, the bat being swung slantwise or nearly horizontally, according to the pitch of the ball. There is no doubt that pointing the



left foot to mid-on is an important maneuver in leg-hitting. It gives ease to the bringing round of the right shoulder, and prevents that uneasy



THE BEGINNING OF THE LEG HIT, SPOILED  
BY THE LEFT FOOT BEING TOO  
STRAIGHT AND THE RIGHT  
KNEE BENT.

stumbling which is often noticeable after a hit has been made, and occasionally prevents the batsman from starting fairly on his run. But it is not at

all easy to secure this habit, and therefore you should remember it carefully in your bedroom. All leg-hitting depends upon your not being afraid of the ball; it is terribly common to see some well-made, lusty lad feebly stroking outward with his bat, his eyes being averted as from a horrid sight, and his whole body lurching uneasily toward point, plainly showing that his main idea is to save his person from a knock, rather than score runs for his side and honor for himself. There are countless leg-balls missed by good players simply from ignorance of these directions, and also many bad high hits are made because the stroke is attempted with a nearly vertical bat, swung across the line of the ball close to the legs, instead of well out toward the pitch.

When balls are pitched short outside the legs, it is best to quickly snick them away for two or three past long-stop. It is a difficult stroke to make, but safe and effective. Many batsmen find it best to do this also to left-handed bowlers, whenever the ball is outside the legs. But if you have a good eye, you can often hit them with advantageous results. If the ball is coming at your legs it must obviously be checked somehow. If a short ball, draw the left leg back close to the right, keeping the left side toward the bowler, and give the ball either a little push away from you, so as to snick it, or a smart tap in front of short leg. If the ball be pitched far up, deal with it by the hit or by forward play, as if it were straight. The latter stroke is one of the most beautiful in the game, but very rarely made, as it demands a perfect judgment of the pitch, besides utter fearlessness as to a possible contusion, and a good wicket; which three conditions are not always fulfilled at the same time.

Now, the force of the stroke depends on two things: first, the power that is given to the bat; secondly, the exact point of time at which it comes

in contact with the ball : the momentum and the moment of the stroke. The share taken by the legs and shoulders in the stroke effect the momentum in this way. The bat strikes the ball, not only because the arms move it, but because the striker walks toward the ball as well.

So much for the momentum. Important though it is, I cannot but feel certain that the moment is more important still.

An apparently gentle stroke with the bat swings it so that at one tiny moment of time it is moving very fast. If even a lanky youth utilizes this moment in his stroke the results are surprising. The bowler marvels, and point steps a yard further back. If a big man does so, and adds the momentum of his body, the speed with which the ball travels is more surprising still. It is clear that the very least conceivable miscalculation of time will effect the force of the blow till nothing is left in it but a sort of sloppy, tired hit which seems to exhaust the strength of the batsman far more than any clean stroke possibly can.

Now this explanation has more than a theoretical interest ; it will give you some clew to your trouble when you find things going wrong. It will render superfluous much abuse of the bat you may be using, since no stroke can drive that is not well-timed ; and it will show you why it is that some days your hitting is clean, and other days weak and uncertain. If it varies in this way it must be because something affects your eye from time to time, and it is your business to discover what that may be. If, on the other hand, it appears that your strokes habitually fail to tell as they should, it will probably be owing to your body not being properly utilized, and a spell of bedroom practice should at once be inaugurated.

#### STALENESS.

This is no new stroke in batting, nor can it be

called a refinement, as it is thought to be common among all classes of players. Staleness is of the nature of a disease; and yet no doctor, as far as I am aware, has rightly diagnosed it, or invented anything like an infallible cure for it. The fact is, the word has been often profaned, as Shelley might have sung. It has been widely and thoughtlessly used; and a good many cricketers have been accustomed to attributing any ill luck they may have had to this mysterious staleness.

Staleness, then, so far as may be gathered from the use of the word among cricketers, is a certain indisposition toward cricket which is supposed to be the result of an excessive amount of play. It is not the same as fatigue, though one of its symptoms is often a kind of lassitude; but it might be described generally as the very reverse of keenness, and, when its sensations coincide with low scoring, a cricketer is apt to tell his friends that he is stale, as if that were enough to explain everything.

It seems to be allowed that a crew may be over-trained, or a runner, or a racket-player. In comparatively simple exercises, such as these, the exact meaning of over-training or staleness is not very difficult to seize. Certain muscles are brought into very violent motion day after day. As long as this continues, and there is no tax upon the rest of the system, the muscles of a healthy man grow stronger. But there comes a climax to this, when, consistently with his general health, he cannot give more to those muscles than he has given.

Now, why does the set of muscles deteriorate after this point has been reached? Simply because muscular power depends on nerve-power, and nerve-power depends on change and recreation. Monotony is the secret of the failure of nerve-power, and it is far easier for a man to reach and overtop his prime in a simple monoto-

nous use of certain muscles than it is in a complex exercise. This will, I think, be admitted, if we assume that one is laboring to perfect himself in lifting heavy weights. For a time he would improve, but finding then that he ceased to improve, his instincts would persuade him to stop for fear of a decline. But the difference in respect to monotony between rowing or running and cricket is enormous. Cricket is the least monotonous game conceivable. It is really a trinity of games. Batting is a science in itself, which contains more variety (if we consider differences of wickets, etc.) than almost any other game; for instance, as compared with a game like tennis, it has the advantage of using both arms—that is, a double set of muscles—and not a single set of muscles in one arm.

These considerations have now paved the way for an investigation of the place really due to staleness among the causes of failure in batting. My conviction is, that its influence is much overrated. It seems very doubtful indeed if, as defined above, it can ever be proved to exist at all; and if any one feels sure that he has at times been stale, he will probably find, on careful recollection of the circumstances, that he is using the word in a wider sense than it is used here, and that he is attributing to staleness various results of ill health, bad luck, etc.

Hence, in case of sudden failure in batting, a cricketer should consider if he has any reason to suppose that it is due to staleness, properly so called, *i.e.*, over-exertion of a monotonous kind. He should beware of a tendency to ascribe it to this.

Nevertheless there are causes of failure, some of which we have touched upon, which are to some extent preventable. In the first place it is clear that as the state of a man's spirits and pluck has a good deal to do with it, he may as

well do his utmost to keep them as well as his muscles in good condition. If he has made some bad scores, and can find no reason, he should remember that the chances which attend on each ball are infinite in number, and, very often no explanation is needed except that a bad stroke has gone to a field and has been caught, whereas at other times just as bad strokes have escaped. It is quite undeniable that, as a test of character and temper, a good long spell of bad luck is unrivaled; especially for a young fellow trying for high distinction, who knows that he has virtue in him. But it will be some help to him to bear in mind that his best chance is to continue constant and eager, and not to bore his friends in the street, or to fume over it in bed. And then, even if the runs do not come, he is laying up for himself a toughness of fiber for other spheres of life, which some more successful cricketers might well envy.

In the next place, he may be dieting himself foolishly. Considering the delicacy of the human eye, and its intimate connection with the digestion, it is foolish for a batsman to rave at fortune when he eats a huge dinner every night, and either goes to bed in a loaded condition, or sits up fooling till two or three in the morning. People differ about diet, but I should advise any disappointed cricketer, in default of other precautions, to begin by cutting down his dinner, and try going to bed a little earlier. Next let him try getting up a little earlier, and a certain increase of abstemiousness all round, though of course a young cricketer's appetite demands generous treatment. But nowadays the rules of simple training are so accessible and so thoroughly sensitive, that it would be useless for me to insist on any such recommendations as these.

Lastly, he may be taking it out of himself by headwork. The disorders which arise from this



imprudence need not be pictured as very rampant among cricketers. Indeed, I am convinced that some headwork which is not too exciting, which is also moderate and regular, is very advantageous to cricket, as a counter-interest. But if it is allowed to interfere with sleep, or necessitates an early breakfast, so that the batsman goes in hungry between twelve and two in the day, mischief will come of it.



## LAWS OF CRICKET.

### *The Game.*

1. A match is played between two sides of eleven players each, unless otherwise agreed upon; each side has two innings, taken alternately, except in the case provided for in Law 53. The choice of innings shall be decided by tossing.

### *Runs.*

2. The score shall be reckoned by runs. A run is scored :—

1st. As often as the batsmen after a hit, or at any time while the ball is in play, shall have crossed, and made good their ground from end to end.

2nd. For penalties under Laws 16, 34, 41, and allowances under 44.

Any run or runs so scored shall be duly recorded by scorers appointed for the purpose.

The side which scores the greatest number of runs wins the match. No match is won unless played out or given up, except in the case provided in Law 45.

### *Appointment of Umpires.*

3. Before the commencement of the match two umpires shall be appointed; one for each end.

### *The Ball.*

4. The ball shall weigh not less than five ounces and a half, nor more than five ounces and three-quarters. It shall measure not less than nine inches, nor more than nine inches and one-quarter in circumference. At the beginning of each innings either side may demand a new ball.

*The Bat.*

5. The bat shall not exceed four inches and one-quarter in the widest part; it shall not be more than thirty-eight inches in length.

*The Wickets.*

6. The wickets shall be pitched opposite and parallel to each other at a distance of twenty-two yards. Each wicket shall be eight inches in width and consist of three stumps, with two bails upon the top. The stumps shall be of equal and sufficient size to prevent the ball from passing through, twenty-seven inches out of the ground.

The bails shall be each four inches in length, and when in position, on the top of the stumps, shall not project more than half an inch above them. The wickets shall not be changed during a match, unless the ground between them becomes unfit for play, and then only by consent of both sides.

*The Bowling Crease.*

7. The bowling crease shall be in a line with the stumps; six feet eight inches in length; the stumps in the center; with a return crease at each end, at right angles behind the wicket.

*The Popping Crease.*

8. The popping crease shall be marked four feet from the wicket, parallel to it, and be deemed unlimited in length.

*The Ground.*

9. The ground shall not be rolled, watered, covered, mown, or beaten during a match, except before the commencement of each inning and of each day's play, when, unless the in-side object, the ground shall be swept and rolled for not more than ten minutes. This shall not prevent the batsman from beating the ground with his bat,

nor the batsman nor bowler from using sawdust in order to obtain a proper foothold.

*The Bowler. No Ball.*

10. The ball must be bowled; if thrown or jerked, the umpire shall call, "No ball."

11. The bowler shall deliver the ball with one foot on the ground behind the crease, and within the return crease, otherwise the umpire shall call, "No ball."

*Wide Ball.*

12. If the bowler shall bowl the ball so high over or so wide of the wicket that in the opinion of the umpire it is not within reach of the striker, the umpire shall call, "Wide ball."

*The Over.*

13. The ball shall be bowled in overs of five balls from each wicket alternately. When five balls have been bowled, and the ball is finally settled in the bowler's or wicket-keeper's hands, the umpire shall call, "Over." Neither a "No ball" nor a "Wide ball" shall be reckoned as one of the "Over."

14. The bowler shall be allowed to change ends as often as he pleases, provided only that he does not bowl two overs consecutively in one inning.

15. The bowler may require the batsman at the wicket from which he is bowling to stand on that side of it which he may direct.

*Scoring off No Balls and Wide Balls.*

16. The striker may hit a "No ball," and whatever runs result shall be added to his score; but he shall not be out from a "No ball," unless he be run out or break Laws 26, 27, 29, 30. All runs made from a "No ball," otherwise than from the bat, shall be scored "No balls," and if no run be made, one run shall be added to that score. From a "Wide ball," as many runs as are run shall be

added to the score as "Wide balls," and if no run be otherwise obtained, one run shall be so added.

*Bye.*

17. If the ball, not having been called "Wide" or "No ball," pass the striker without touching his bat, or person, and any runs be obtained, the umpire shall call, "Bye;" but if the ball touch any part of the striker's person (hand excepted) and any run be obtained, the umpire shall call, "Leg Bye," such runs to be scored "Byes," and "Leg Byes," respectively.

*Play.*

18. At the beginning of the match, and of each inning, the umpire at the bowler's wicket shall call, "Play;" from that time no trial ball shall be allowed to any bowler on the ground between the wickets, and when one of the batsmen is out, the use of the bat shall not be allowed to any person until the next batsman shall come in.

*Definitions.*

19. A batsman shall be held to be "out of his ground," unless his bat in hand or some part of his person be grounded within the line of the popping crease.

20. The wicket shall be held to be "down" when either of the bails is struck off, or if both bails be off, when a stump is struck out the ground.

*The Striker.*

The striker is out—

21. If the wicket be bowled down, even if the ball first touch the striker's bat or person:—"Bowled."

22. Or, if the ball, from a stroke of the bat or hand, but not the wrist, be held before it touch the ground, although it be hugged to the body of the catcher:—"Caught."

23. Or, if in playing at the ball, provided it be not touched by the bat or hand, the striker be out of his ground, and the wicket be put down by the wicket-keeper with the ball or with hand or arm, with ball in hand :—"Stumped."

24. Or, if with any part of his person he stops the ball which, in the opinion of the umpire at the bowler's wicket, shall have been pitched in a straight line from it to the striker's wicket and would have hit it :—"Leg before wicket."

25. Or, if in playing at the ball he hit down his wicket with his bat or any part of his person or dress :—"Hit wicket."

26. Or, if under pretense of running, or otherwise, either of the batsmen willfully prevent a ball from being caught :—"Obstructing the field."

27. Or, if the ball be struck, or be stopped by any part of his person, and he willfully strikes again, except it be done for the purpose of guarding his wicket, which he may do with his bat, or any part of his person, except his hands :—"Hit the ball twice."

### *The Batsman.*

Either batsman is out—

28. If in running, or at any other time, while the ball is in play, he be out of his ground, and his wicket be struck down by the ball after touching any fieldsman, or by the hand or arm, with ball in hand, of any fieldsman :—"Run out."

29. Or, if he touch with his hands, or take up the ball while in play, unless at the request of the opposite side :—"Handled the ball."

30. Or, if he willfully obstruct any fieldsman :—"Obstructing the field."

31. If the batsmen have crossed each other, he that runs for the wicket which is put down is out; if they have not crossed, he that has left the wicket which is put down is out.

32. The striker being caught, no run shall be

scored. A batsman being run out, that run which was being attempted shall not be scored.

33. A batsman being out from any cause, the ball shall be "dead."

#### *Lost Ball.*

34. If a ball in play cannot be found or recovered, any fieldsman may call, "Lost ball," when the ball shall be "dead;" six runs shall be added to the score; but if more than six runs have been run before "Lost ball" has been called, as many runs as have been run shall be scored.

35. After the ball shall have been finally settled in the wicket-keeper's or bowler's hand, it shall be "dead;" but when the bowler is about to deliver the ball, if the batsman at his wicket be out of his ground before actual delivery, the said bowler may run him out; but if the bowler throw at that wicket, and any run result, it shall be scored "No ball."

36. A batsman shall not retire from his wicket and return to it to complete his inning after another has been in, without the consent of the opposite side.

#### *Substitute.*

37. A substitute shall be allowed to field or run between wickets for any player who may during the match be incapacitated by illness or injury, but for no other reason, except with the consent of the opposite side.

38. In all cases where a substitute shall be allowed, the consent of the opposite side shall be obtained as to the person to act as substitute, and the place in the field which he shall take.

39. In case any substitute shall be allowed to run between wickets, the striker may be run out if he or his substitute be out of his ground. If the striker be out of his ground while the ball is in play, that wicket which he has left may be put



down and the striker given out, although the other batsman may have made good the ground at that end, and the striker and his substitute at the other end.

40. A batsman is liable to be out for any infringement of the Laws by his substitute.

#### *The Fieldsman.*

41. The fieldsman may stop the ball with any part of his person, but if he willfully stops it otherwise, the ball shall be "dead," and five runs added to the score; whatever runs may have been made, five only shall be added.

#### *Wicket-Keeper.*

42. The wicket-keeper shall stand behind the wicket. If he shall take the ball for the purpose of stumping before it has passed the wicket, or, if he shall disturb the striker by any noise, or motion, or if any part of his person be over or before the wicket, the striker shall not be out, excepting under Laws 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30.

#### *Duties of Umpires.*

43. The umpires are the sole judges of fair or unfair play, of the fitness of the ground, the weather, and the light for play; all disputes shall be settled by them, and if they disagree, the actual state of things shall continue.

44. They shall pitch fair wickets, arrange boundaries where necessary, and the allowance to be made for them, and change ends after each side has had one inning.

45. They shall allow two minutes for each striker to come in, and ten minutes between each inning. When they shall call, "Play," the side refusing to play shall lose the match.

46. They shall not order a batsman out unless appealed to by the other side.

47. The umpire at the bowler's wicket shall be



appealed to before the other umpire in all cases except in those of stumping, hit wicket, run out at the striker's wicket, or arising out of Law 42, but in any case in which an umpire is unable to give a decision, he shall appeal to the other umpire, whose decision shall be final.

48. If the umpire at the bowler's end be not satisfied of the absolute fairness of the delivery of any ball, he shall call, "No ball."

48a. The umpire shall take especial care to call, "No ball" instantly upon delivery; "Wide ball" as soon as it shall have passed the striker.

49. If either batsman run a short run, the umpire shall call, "One short," and the run shall not be scored.

50. After the umpire has called, "Over," the ball is "dead," but an appeal may be made as to whether either batsman is out; such appeal, however, shall not be made after the delivery of the next ball, nor after any cessation of play.

51. No umpire shall be allowed to bet.

52. No umpire shall be changed during a match, unless with the consent of both sides, except in case of violation of Law 51; then either side may dismiss him.

### *Following Innings.*

53. The side which goes in second shall follow their innings, if they have scored eighty runs less than the opposite side.

54. On the last day of a match, and in a one-day match at any time, the in-side may declare their innings at an end.

## ONE-DAY MATCHES.

1. The side which goes in second shall follow their inning if they have scored sixty runs less than the opposite side.

2. The match, unless played out, shall be decided by the first innings. Prior to the commencement of a match it may be agreed—that the “Over” consist of five or six balls.

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## SINGLE WICKET.

*The Laws are, where they apply, the same as the above, with the following alterations and additions.*

1. One wicket shall be pitched, as in Law 6, with a bowling stump opposite to it, at a distance of twenty-two yards. The bowling crease shall be in a line with the bowling stump; and drawn according to Law 7.

2. When there shall be less than five players on a side, bounds shall be placed twenty-two yards each in a line from the off and leg stump.

3. The ball must be hit before the bounds to entitle the striker to a run, which run cannot be obtained unless he touch the bowling stump or crease in a line with his bat, or some part of his person, or go beyond them, and return to the popping crease.

4. When the striker shall hit the ball, one of his feet must be on the ground behind the popping crease, otherwise the umpire shall call, “No hit,” and no run shall be scored.

5. When there shall be less than five players on a side, neither byes, leg byes, nor overthrows shall be allowed, nor shall the striker be caught out behind the wicket, nor stumped.

6. The fieldsman must return the ball so that it shall cross the ground between the wicket and the bowling stump, or between the bowling stump and the bounds; the striker may run until the ball be so returned.

7. After the striker shall have made one run, if he start again he must touch the bowling stump or crease, and return before the ball shall cross the ground to entitle him to another.

8. The striker shall be entitled to three runs for lost ball, and the same number for balls willfully stopped by a fieldsman otherwise than with any part of his person.

9. When there shall be more than four players on a side, there shall be no bounds. All hits, byes, leg byes, and overthrows shall then be allowed.

10. There shall be no restriction as to the ball being bowled in Overs, but no more than one minute shall be allowed between each ball.

(THE END.)



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